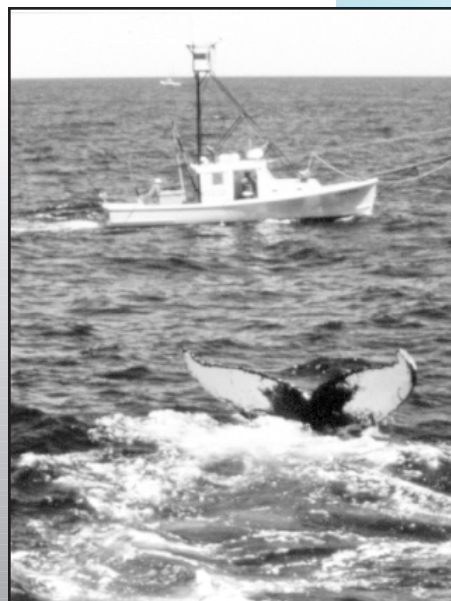


Management Plan Review



Multiple demands on Sanctuary resources make development of a management plan a challenging but rewarding process.

*Photographer:
David Wiley, IWC*

Management Plan Review

Management plans are Sanctuary-specific documents that perform many functions, including describing regulations and boundaries; outlining staffing and budget needs; setting priorities and performance measures for resource protection, research, and education programs; and guiding development of future budgets and management activities. Management plan review, required by law for all National Marine Sanctuaries, is conducted to ensure that each site properly conserves and protects its nationally significant living and cultural resources.

The Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary's existing management plan was published in July 1993. In December 1998 and January 1999, the Sanctuary initiated review of its management plan by holding "scoping" meetings to ask the public for comments on the status of site management. Scoping comments generally include a broad range of information on scope, types and significance of issues related to the Sanctuary's management. The management plan review process continues with distribution of this document as the forerunner to additional scoping meetings and the public comment period planned for Summer 2002.

During the initial scoping meetings of 1998/99, participants identified concerns in need of further attention. Characterized as "issues," the following themes emerged as the general areas of concern. The order of listing does not imply priority. Future public comment on management of the Sanctuary is not limited to this or any given set of issues.

- Alteration of seafloor habitat and ecosystem protection
- Impacts of human activities on marine mammals
- Condition of water quality
- Lack of public awareness, and
- Effective enforcement

Over the course of the next one-two years, management plan review will continue to be a community-based process, providing numerous opportunities for public participation. Many of you live near, use or intrinsically value this special place that is Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The management plan review process is your chance to provide important input regarding the Sanctuary's future and to ensure that its resources are protected, conserved and properly used for benefit of current and future generations. Reading this document should stimulate your interest in the existing management plan and, ultimately, in future management of the site.